

Cannon Blast

Keeping the families of Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division informed.



Vol. 1, Issue 3

May 20, 2006

Need a lift?

Sgt. Yessenia Alfaro of 589th Brigade Support Battalion carries her battle buddy during the Iron Gunner Desert Fitness Competition' Iron Gunner Relay. (Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO)

Iron Gunners remain essential to 4ID mission

Hello to all the Iron Gunner families and friends,

We have officially passed the six month point in this deployment and the Iron Gunner troopers are performing magnificently.

All the missions the units of the brigade are conducting provide support to both Division and Corps.

Your Soldiers are routinely cited by the leadership of the division as being the best they have seen.

I know you are all very proud of the difficult work they perform. Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela and I share the pride you have in your Soldiers.

The brigade has been conducting missions throughout the entire



By Col. Allen Batschelet

country in support of the fight against the insurgency and rebuilding of Iraq.

The Iron Caissons continue to provide support to Soldiers across the entire division.

Although they log many miles on the road, their rehearsals and focus on the smallest of details ensures that every Soldier is ready, 100 percent of the time.

The "Deep Strike" battalion has been living up to their name by providing guided missile fires in support of many different units throughout the theater.

2nd Battalion, 20th Field

Artillery has fired many missiles and each one has hit their intended target at distances beyond 60 kilometers.

In the coming months, 2-20 FA will be moving here to Camp Liberty to rejoin the brigade.

The rest of the Brigade is still focused here on Camp Liberty and provides critical radar and signal support to the division each day.

Regarding my discussion of mission accomplishment, the rear detachment troopers continue to exceed the standard.

The Rear Detachment and the leaders and Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery (multiple launch rocket system) provide the top quality leadership and mentoring that all of our families

Please see **IG6** page **10**

Milestone marks continuous improvements for Hard Rock

By 1st Lt. Bryan French
Medical Platoon Leader

First of all, I would like to thank all of the families and friends that give their support to our Soldiers here at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

We can't thank you enough for the emails, letters, and of course, packages. That little taste of home helps us make it through the day.

Over the past four months we have sent nearly 60 Soldiers home on environmental morale leave all over the United States and the world.

Thanks to our personnel working in the S-1 and training room, this program has been going well and we are looking forward to getting the rest of Hard Rock through the rotation.

On a serious note, Hard Rock Battery has been working and training diligently in several areas to bet-

ter prepare our Soldiers for the challenges they may encounter here and throughout their military careers.

HHB leaders have been using a good portion of their time here for leadership and personal development of their Soldiers. We realize that the time we have here can be used to improve the knowledge base of the Soldiers that will make up the future of the Army.

One of our major training events this month was an M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon and M-16/M-4 range held on May 2. This range, led by Sgt. 1st Class John Coleman, gave several Hard Rock Soldiers the opportunity to fire and familiarize themselves on the M-249, as well as verify their zeros on their personally assigned weapons.

HHB tries to have at least one range a month to keep soldiers skilled with the weapons systems that they might use in combat.

Please see **HHB** page **9**

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PAO Soldiers combine expertise, experience to tell Fires Bde. story

By Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Malec
Fires Bde. PAO NCOIC

Greetings from Baghdad! I would like to first start out by saying that it gives me great pleasure to contribute to this month's Cannon Blast. Since this technically is my first article for the paper, I first need to give credit to where it's rightfully due.



Spc. Allison Churchill

I tip my hat greatly to the Cannon Blast producer and editor, Spc. Allison Churchill, who hails from Edinboro, Pa. She came to the Fires Brigade from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team and became a proud member of the Iron Gunners October 2005.

Since joining the team, which, along with the rest of the Ivy Division, was in the throws of ramping up for deployment, she's demonstrated her technical expertise time and time again and continually displays an immense passion for the job of telling the stories of Fires Brigade Soldiers.

It's not easy putting this newsletter together, and she's taken it on full force. Since I've been raised primarily in a video and audio background throughout my 17 years, I greatly appreciate her help. Believe me, if I were to produce it, the Cannon Blast would not look nearly as professional.

So once again, let's give a huge round of applause to Churchill for doing this so willingly, and always with a grand smile.

One more thing I greatly appreciate about her is that she is a quick study which is definitely coming in handy this month, for it is my turn to take environmental morale leave.

I will travel back to be with my family in San Antonio. The PAO shop is all hers when I'm gone, and I have full confidence in

her abilities.

Now, a little bit about me. I entered the Army in 1989, and I've seen quite a bit of the world in my chosen field.

I learned my broadcast craft as a one-striper at the Southern Command Radio and Television Network in Panama where I got my first taste of combat during Operation Just Cause.

From there I could not get enough. One year later, in 1991, I found myself broadcasting on the morning show in from a small trailer in a warehouse on Camp Doha "live" on K-107 – the Armed Forces Desert Network during Operation Desert Storm.

I followed up this adventure with a one year stint at the American Forces Korea Network in Taegu, South Korea, followed by a brief tour in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1993.

In 1996, I would find myself stationed in beautiful Vicenza, Italy, where I also got to take a side trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina on three occasions.

And if you can believe it, I made my way back to my old stomping grounds in Taegu Korea, where I was TV news director for the largest coverage area in the Republic.

Boy, talk about feeling like a big fish in a small pond. I lived there from 1999 to 2002 and had a wonderful time forging long lasting friendships with both Americans and Koreans.

Before becoming the Fires Brigade Public Affairs Officer, I worked with the Army and Air Force Hometown News Service Agency in San Antonio, which kept me on the road for varying amounts of time each month. There, I participated in the beginning stages of the Iraqi invasion, along with playing a role in get-

Please see **PAO** page 10

Focus still strong in Fires Brigade

It is hard to believe, but by the time you read this, we will be going on the sixth-month mark of our deployment.

Our Soldiers are doing a great job for the country and the people of Iraq.

We are comrades.

The American Army and Iraqi forces are taking the fight to the enemy and your Soldier with the Fires Brigade plays a big part in the fight.

Your Fires Brigade command group continues to train and improve the quality of life of our Soldiers.

The brigade leadership will not allow complacency defeat our efforts and hard work.

Our Soldiers remain focused. The temperature is beginning to rise, but we still expect our Soldiers to wear their personal protective equipment.

I remind myself and our Soldiers everyday that our loved ones are contributing by hanging our American flag in the Brigade Headquarters.

Our flag represents the support from our Nation to their troops in the war zone.

I assure you that we are incredibly proud of every one of you, and what you have accomplished as a team in support of our mission.

Continue to look out for each other back in the states as we do the same here in Iraq.

Thank you for answering the call to support your Army at war - we will never forget your sacrifice.

Gilbert L. Canuela
Soldier



Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Malec

S-6 enjoys athletic, professional success

By Staff Sgt. Lisa Walters
Fires Bde. Network Administrator

The Fires Brigade S-6 shop had a winning season in spring.

Two members of S-6, Sgt. Barron Rhodes and Spc. Damian Wilson, helped Headquarters and Headquarters Battery win the Iron Gunner Relay during the brigade's Desert Fitness Competition.

Furthermore, the coach was Sgt. Patricia Matos, also of S-6. She overcame last minute injuries and duty rosters to coach the team to a first place win. The team strutted their stuff on the four-man push-up, the fireman's carry and other events that tested their physical abilities.

While S-6 is known for radios and computers, video is a new area that is taking hold.

Staff Sgt. Robert Martinez produced, wrote and starred in "Harris Training with VIASAT." The video helps train Harris radio users to send data over the tactical satellite.

While it may seem glamorous, Martinez had to work long hours and know his product inside and out in order to create an expert video for future users.



Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde., PAO

S-6 Soldier Sgt. Barron Rhodes, front, pushes Headquarters and Headquarters Battery to victory in the Iron Gunner Relay, an event in the Iron Gunner Desert Fitness Competition. Team coach Sgt. Patricia Matos, standing center, is also in S-6.

This writer participated in script development for a Fires Brigade St. Barbara's Day Ball skit. Sgt. 1st Class Malec, public affairs, and I began filming the skit, involving several brigade Soldiers in May.

Spc. Brandon Cortez is also contributing to the St. Barbara's day festivities.

Cortez is creating a slide show memorializing the brigade's time. Please see S-6 page 8

Personnel Soldiers take break for introductions

By W01 Arnold Guzman
Human Resources Technician

The Soldiers of the Fires Brigade S-1 office continue to work hard ensuring our Soldiers are administratively taken care of. This month we'd like to introduce everyone in the section.

Maj. Andrey Tymniak is the brigade S-1 officer-in-charge. He is a native of Houston and holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Houston. Tymniak has been in the Army for 19 years and he is currently serving on his third deployment to Iraq. His primary duties consist of overseeing the operations of the S-1 office.

Warrant Officer One Arnold Guzman is the brigade human resources technician. He is originally from Yonkers, New York and has been in the Army for 12 years. Guzman served in Operation Enduring Freedom from March 2004 to February 2005. He joined the Fires Brigade in September 2005 after completing the Warrant Officer Candidate School at Fort Rucker, Ala.

Guzman has an associate's degree in military studies and enjoys watching sports entertainment programming on American Forces Network. His

duties while deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom include the daily management of all personnel actions, and the environmental morale leave program.

Sgt. 1st Class Shauna Patterson is our noncommissioned officer-in-charge. She is from Decatur, Ga., and has been in the Army for 18 years. Patterson served in Operation Iraqi Freedom II from October 2004 to March 2005. She has earned her associates degree in arts, and enjoys running, taking long walks and reading. Her duties while deployed include personnel accountability, NCO evaluation reports, personnel actions and processing awards. Her favorite saying is, "Good Night!"

Staff Sgt. LaTrece Peterson is the administrative noncommissioned officer. Her favorite hobbies are reading and listening to music. She loves to shop. Peterson is originally from Crestview, Fla., and has one year of college.

Peterson has been in the Army for 16 years. This is her third deployment; her others took her to Bosnia and Hungary. Her duties include finance actions, awards processing and personnel reporting. She is commonly heard saying, "You tripping Shauna J!"

Please see S-1 page 10



Photo contributed by Capt. Jim Silverstrim, Medical plans officer

Pfc. Alex Mecca, medic, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, conducts airway management training on a SimMan, a medical training aid that gives realistic responses to treatment.

Medics = force multipliers

By Capt. Jim Silverstrim
Medical plans officer

Working in the field of medicine is an incredibly rewarding profession. Serving your country and being a part of the medical profession increases that sense of reward several fold.

Similar to the chaplain corps, your sole purpose is to serve your fellow Soldiers. Physicians, combat medics and other Soldiers in the medical field have been serving the medical needs of America's Soldiers for more than 200 years during both war and peace.

Every member of the medical team for the Fires Brigade is proud to continue this tradition, and our team is doing great work in Iraq. It's impossible to include everything we've done here, but I will highlight some of our accomplishments from the last month.

At the beginning of April, Lt. Col. Jon Allison, an internal medicine specialist, joined the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery medical platoon and he will remain with us for the rest of our deployment. His permanent duty station is Fort Lewis and he worked at Madigan Hospital prior to joining the Fires Brigade.

Allison is already well incor-

porated into the section and working shifts alongside our other medical provider and brigade surgeon, Maj. Barbara Bowsher.

Allison and Bowsher have also been giving our medics several classes to build upon the skills they already have.

Bowsher gave a lecture on airway management. Our medics were able to practice their skills on a medical training aid called a SimMan.

Ensuring your patient has a good airway is the first step in evaluating a casualty. Bowsher's expertise in this area and the hands on practice in treating a casualty with a compromised airway gave the medics confidence.

Allison gave a lecture on the types of shock and appropriate treatment. The proper and rapid treatment of shock in trauma patients is crucial for saving Soldiers' lives.

Allison also gave a class on the categories and applications of emergency medications.

Pharmacology is a language all its own in medicine and, like all languages, if you don't use it often it is easy to lose. Many emergency medications aren't used on a regular basis, so it is important to have

Please see **MEDICS** page 11

Take advantage of the second half, says chaplain

By Chap. (Maj.) Mike Allen
Fires Bde. Chaplain

Most people who know me very well know that my favorite professional sports team is the San Antonio Spurs. As I write this article they are tied a game a piece in the conference semifinals with that other Texas team from up north in Dallas.

Sometimes it is amazing to see the changes that take place in a game from the first half to the second half. Many times commentators question the players or coaches about what was said or done during those half-time huddles.

It is a time when the players and coaches examine the first half of the game and decide what changes need to take place to be successful in the second half. Usually the players remain the same; it's just a different plan for success.

We are at the projected half time of our current deployment. Similar to a sporting event; it is appropriate to take a look at the first half and see what has worked and what has not.

Many of us have had or will soon have the opportunity to be together for a brief time called environmental morale leave.

No doubt, it is certainly not long enough — really just long enough to "stir things up"; get re-acclimated to a different time zone; stop feeling like a visitor in our own home; interrupt established schedules and then pack up for the redeployment to Iraq.

That EML time might also reveal some opportunities for growth in our families as well.

As we look at the past six months; think on these words of Confucius: "No man (or woman) can enter the same river twice; Please see **CHAPLAIN** page 13

A/26 FA pays respect to the 'Woodman'

By Capt. Albert Bossar
A/26 FA Commander

For the month of June it is my distinct pleasure to introduce the Battery A, 26th Field Artillery "does it all man," the one and only Chief Warrant Officer 2 John Edwards.

Everyone knows that in any good organization, you need a "utility fielder," to use a baseball term, someone that can do a number of things well. Edwards is far more than that. He is the Jack of all trades for the battery, the guy who can find anything, and the battery carpenter extraordinaire. He is the "Woodman."

People ask how Edwards came to have such a distinct name. Well the answer is a long one. See, here in Iraq, one resource that is extremely hard to get is good wood that will actually build a decent structure with. Everyone in Iraq is trying to get their hands on wood, especially here at Camp Liberty.

Edwards has been the guy that time and time again has been able to come up with wood, whether it be planks or boards or sheets of plywood for sections within the battery.

Please see A/26 page 8



Photo contributed by A/26 FA

Chief Warrant Officer 2 John Edwards builds shelter to keep his Soldiers cool.

S-4 welcomes new faces

By CW2 Willard Blair
Fires Bde. Maintenance Technician

The Fires Brigade S-4 welcomed several Soldiers to the shop this month, while saying good-bye to an old friend.

The time has come where we must bid farewell to Staff Sgt. James Donald, so he can continue to progress in his career.

Donald has long been with the Fires Brigade S-4 where he has blazed the trails as the brigade maintenance noncommissioned officer. This position is actually meant to be held by a master sergeant (two grades above his) and a maintenance technician. This fact alone speaks volumes about Donald's competence and abilities.

Add in the turbulence of overseeing the start up of 589th Brigade Support Battalion, the reorganization of 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery and Battery A, 26th Field Artillery, as well as the brigade itself, and the fact that he faced it all single handed without the benefit of have a maintenance technician to help shoulder the burden.

It goes without saying that Donald will be truly missed at brigade as he leaves the S-4 team to spearhead yet another position of great responsibility as the 589th BSB motor sergeant.

During his tenor at brigade Donald has been the "go-to-guy" for his superiors, peers and subordinates alike for current maintenance issues. Everyone knows without a doubt that he will continue to blaze trails and ensure the success of our maintenance program.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Willard Blair is new to the S-4 team. He has come from 589th BSB to become the brigade maintenance technician. Blair comes from organizing, supervising, and developing and implementing procedures for the 589th BSB Motor Pool.

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Drummond recently joined the team as the brigade property book NCO. He comes from Company A, 589th BSB. Drummond has already proved his metal by running the property book office while Warrant Officer 1 Lionel Marco was enjoying his environmental morale leave.

Master Sgt. Shelly Gonsalves and Marco both recently returned from EML.

Gonsalves spent her time away from Iraq in Killeen where she not only spent much needed quality time with her family but also took care of some issues for the brigade and division.

Marco also went to Killeen and has returned to keep brigade property accounted for.

Sgt. Sisily Eager was inducted into the NCO Corps this month. The induction ceremony serves as encouragement for Soldiers to evolve into quality NCOs, by reinforcing NCO pride and sense of duty.

While Gonsalves was on EML Eager proved herself by covering down on the duties of someone three grades higher and did an outstanding job.

Sgt. Kurt Gullens, our repair and utility NCO, is busy as ever.

This month he built an Olympic-style torch and fire basin which was used to signify the start of the Iron Gunner Desert Fitness Competition.

Gullens also prepared a gravel path to make the trip to brigade less muddy. He is also vigilant in keeping the headquarters building in top shape.

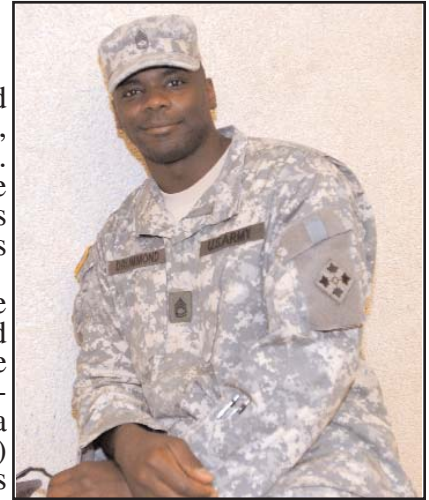


Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO

New property book office Soldier Sgt. 1st Class Richard Drummond.

324th NSC Soldier essential in commo war

**By 1st Lt. Amber Spain
324th NSC XO**

In a war requiring more radio communication than ever, commanders need more help than ever controlling the frequencies that allow their Soldiers to stay connected.

In Fires Brigade, Sgt. 1st Class Mark Branch fills this need.

Branch serves 324th Network Support Company and the brigade as a battlefield spectrum manager, or frequency manager.

Branch is essentially a frequency traffic cop. He advises the commander what frequencies can or can't be used in specific areas.

To earn this role, Branch attended an eight-week class at Fort

Gordon, Ga., and now has an additional skill identifier.

The title entails several responsibilities. Because brigades only acquired BSMs when the Army became a modular force, Branch wrote a standard operating procedure for his role. He based the SOP on his experiences working with the 4th Infantry Division BSM and the Fires Brigade mission.

Branch accomplishes his primary mission, advising the commander, by requesting, distributing and maintaining records for all frequencies required by the Brigade for communication equipment.

Branch also helps Fires Brigade's subordinate units prepare and process interference reports.

The frequencies Branch works with have to be authorized by Iraq's government while we are here. When we redeploy, Branch will start the process with the National Security Agency in Maryland.

In either case, the authorization process goes through several channels before Fires Brigade can use a frequency.

Units operating on unauthorized frequencies can see hefty fines. One unit that interfered with commercial radio and television for several days cost the United States government \$92,000.

With every new piece of communications equipment the Army fields, Branch's role becomes more important.

Upcoming challenge brings out best in brigade leadership

**By 1st Lt. Edward Talamera
Fires Brigade Operations**

In a few short weeks, the truth will be out there.

After six months of talk, it will be obvious if my peers and I have been taking care of ourselves or not.

On June 14 we will complete six miles as quickly as our bodies allow us in full battle rattle in the "DCO Challenge."

Under the deputy commander, Lt. Col. Timothy Daugherty's guidance, the staff officers are not required to conduct group scheduled physical training while deployed.

In return, we had to develop an individual plan tailored to achieve our physical fitness goals. The plan includes our height, weight, body fat and other details.

The information is incorporated to monitor our progress before, during and after the deployment.

The individual goals between the Soldiers vary from "tone muscles," "decrease run time," "cut down body fat," to the most popular one, "LOSE WEIGHT." Some goals might

seem a little extreme, but it adds to the fun and challenge of the program.

The bottom line is everyone has a physical fitness goal to achieve throughout the deployment. Only the individual setting the goal can answer to the challenge.

My goals were to lose weight, then tone up my muscles and maintain a good physique.

I accomplished the first in two months. I ran five or six days a week and averaged 25-30 miles. As a result, I lost 10 pounds. I am now in the second phase and working on my muscles.

I hope, in the next four weeks, to increase my endurance for the DCO's challenge.

Factors such as the temperature that morning, the route we take and how my body responds to the equipment could all affect my performance.

However, the most important factor is my own physical strength.

Given the amount of time I've had to work out and the time remaining until the challenge, I am confident I will succeed.

PCS options available through re-up

**By Sgt. 1st Class Mark Kirkland
Fires Bde. Career Counselor**

The month of April has been very good for the Brigade in sustaining America's Army.

More than 30 Fires Brigade Soldiers re-enlisted for a total bonus payout of over \$500,000.

Military personnel message 06-007 terminated April 30, bringing to an end the \$22,500 bonus cap established for Soldiers with original ETS dates prior to Oct. 1, 2007.

Movement assignments under Option 4 (overseas assignment) and Option 5 (conus-station-of-choice) are now available for Soldiers that are with in 18 months of ETS.

Those looking to permanently change stations need to go see their respective unit retention noncommissioned officers or your brigade career counselor with your assignment of preference request.

The reserves component career counselors are ready to talk to any Soldier either officer or enlisted within 6 months of separation who plan to transition from the Army.

The reserve component offers choices such as new duty assignments, MOS change, drill sergeant duty and bonus* for qualified transitioning Soldiers. Call Master Sgt. Donna Bass at DSN 318-847-2352 for more information.

Thank you for your dedication.
"Stay Iron Gunners!"

May brings celebration to intel team

By Sgt. 1st Class John Coleman
Senior Intelligence Analyst

As Fires Brigade continues to support the war effort during Operation Iraqi Freedom, the S-2 section continues to drive forward providing actionable intelligence to the 4th Infantry Division and our subordinate units within the brigade.

Maj. Bryan Gibby has worked many arduous shifts at the division headquarters and was finally rewarded with the opportunity to take a much deserved environmental morale leave. Although his presence will be dearly missed over here in theater, we are very happy for him to get the opportunity to go and spend some time with his family.

Spc. Sean Hefflin and Pfc. Ryan Stowell also departed to spend time at home with their loved ones.

In their absence Spc. Matthew Wilson and Pfc. Kristin Blair have done an outstanding job of stepping up their performance and ensuring that our job still gets done.

Capt. Jewell Hoscila and Pfc. Rachel Nadeau are still off working at the division headquarters and recently were lauded by the division commanding general for their stellar performance of duties.

Sgt. 1st Class Lawanda Perry celebrated her "18th Birthday" again this past month. The entire section had a bash for her in the office.

Along with maintaining our current mission, training and Soldier proficiency has been a focal point for the shop over the past month.

Sgt. Bradford Oliver has been doing a great job of ensuring that all of our geospatial analysts receive as much training as possible.

He has also been encouraging other Soldiers as they gain rank.

Oliver sponsored Sgt. David Penton at the Fires Brigade Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony, inducting him into the prestigious NCO Corps. He also sponsored the newly promotable Spc. Samuel Atkins at this month's promotion board.

Master Sgt. Rodney Byus jumped right back in the swing of things upon returning from EML. He participated in the Iron Gunners Desert Fitness Competition and gave his all representing the battery in the relay race.

As the time passes the S-2 section constantly bears in mind the reasons that we serve our great nation. We enjoy continuing the mission but can't wait to get home to our loved ones.

A/26, cont'd from pg. 6

Not only is he able to find it, but once he gets it, he is able to build almost anything.

Take, for example, the shelters Edwards is building to cover and shade the radar sections. As everyone knows, in the summertime the heat here is excruciating.

Having some overhead cover that enables you to have air conditioning hooked up is a must. Edwards helped build a rock steady shelter from scratch with no blueprints.

Edwards also built storage facilities for the battery and shelving systems for the containers that hold critical parts and resources, not only for A/26 FA, but for a number of the units we support on a daily basis.

He is currently working on his latest and greatest masterpiece — a deck that will act as a place for Soldiers, NCOs and officers of A/26 FA to gather and relax while they have a cup of coffee or smoke a cigar after a long hard day. His work is first rate. The commercial contractors here could not do a better job.

But these feats are only a small part of everything that this Warrant Officer does for the battery.

He is a physical fitness role model as well. He dedicates himself daily to doing physical training to maintain a high level of physical fitness. This is evidenced by his ability to nearly max the PT test every time he takes it.

Edwards also jumps on convoys to deliver mission-essential equipment and acquires resources for the battery. As I said, Edwards is a man of many talents.

Lastly, it is an honor for me to congratulate Edwards on recently becoming promotable. He is an outstanding officer and deserves this recognition. Well done Chief, it is an honor and privilege to serve with you. *Wolfpack!*

S-6, cont'd from pg. 4

on the ground since arriving in Kuwait. He is including all aspects of life from all subordinate units and showing the day to day challenges and enjoyment of life in Iraq.

Master Sgt. Trevor Jones, a proud member of the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club since 2002, is coordinating a brigade effort to review more noncommissioned officers for the Audie Murphy Club.

The process of being selected as a SAMC member is strenuous on the Soldier, their sponsor and the leadership approving the Soldiers. Criteria to join this organization are high and Soldiers are evaluated on every aspect of the NCO's duties and responsibilities.

Not all S-6 personnel were busy working. Sgt. 1st Class John Terry enjoyed time with his wife back in Fort Hood during his environmental morale leave. We are glad to have him back.

Spc. Ariel Class earned a day off from work for his chess skills. Maj. Clarence White has offered up the bounty of a day off for beating him in a game of chess. Class achieved that feat this month, being the first and only person to accomplish that task to date.

The S-6 will be quite busy in June. Two personnel are going on leave while others will be preparing for promotion and Soldier/NCO of the Month boards.

HHB, cont'd from pg. 2

The S-6 section is teaching Microsoft Office classes every week, led by Sgt. 1st Class John Terry.

Many new soldiers are expected to be proficient with programs they've never used. This gives Soldiers those necessary skills.

For all of the work that Hard Rock Battery does, we also take time out for some fun and healthy competition.

At the end of April, Fires Brigade held the first Iron Gunner Desert Fitness Competition, which pitted the best of all six units here at Camp Liberty against each other for the Commander's Cup.

The competition, organized by 324th Network Support Company, included an Army Physical Fitness Test, weight lifting and several relay events.

Although HHB passed a close victory to 324th, we did earn first place in the APFT, thanks to Sgt. Oscar Delgado, and team relay race. Team members Sgt. Fahad Jaha, Sgt. Barron Rhodes, Spc. Damian Wilson and Pfc. Brandon Fowlkes were coached by Sgt. Patricia Matos.

Earlier this month, the Hard Rock Battery took part in a Command Inspection Program. The CIP was intended to examine all aspects of the brigade's operations and logistics, from medical, to convoy operations to maintenance, and quantify its readiness and accordance with regulations.

Overall, HHB did very well and met or exceeded all of the standards in the inspections.

Soldiers who received particular notice from the Fires Brigade staff for excellence were Pfc. Michael Robinson, for his exceptional efficiency running the mail room; Pfc. Luis Garcia, for his well-organized arms room; and Spc. Brett Graham for his knowledge and proficiency in the PSD's communications systems.

Each of these Soldiers received a Fires Brigade coin and recognition by the brigade commander, Col. Allen Batschelet.

Hard Rock also has the pleasure of welcoming Sgt. Robert Haring, Sgt. Thomas Hance and Spc. Christopher Owen, S-3; Sgt.

Isaias Clay, supply; Spc. Todd Fatzinger, PSD; and Spc. Rosalio Laguna, S-1 to the battery.

These Soldiers returned from their deployment with the 1st Cavalry Division in the spring 2005, and volunteered to return to theater. All six re-enlisted shortly after their arrival.

Sgt. Tanya Hypolite-Griffen, training room, NCOIC also reenlisted.

Last month, HHB, along with other units in Fires Brigade, held a Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony to formally incorporate and introduce Soldiers into the NCO Corps who made the professional and responsible step from specialist to corporal or sergeant.

One of these fine Soldiers was Cpl. Latonia Johnson, who had strong feelings about her professional rising.

"This ceremony meant a lot to me, allowing me to show my command that they can put their trust in me to be a leader and take responsibility at the first level of the NCO channel. At that moment I demonstrated my obligation to do my best and lead my soldiers, and be the best leader I can be," said Johnson.

Other HHB Soldiers honored were Jaha, Cpl. Donald Barrow, Sgt. Sisily Eager, Sgt. William Rassman, Sgt. Nathan Theroux, Sgt. Ulises Gastelum and Sgt. Raymond Siller.

In addition to honoring new members of the NCO Corps, HHB also promoted two Soldiers this month. Spc. Corey Jarels, PSD, made the well-deserved promotion from private first class.

Sgt. Christopher Fernandez had the unique opportunity to be pinned by the 5th Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli.

This is not the first time that Chiarelli has honored Fernandez.

While deployed with 1st Cavalry Division, Fernandez earned the Silver Star for exceptional valor and heroism in combat following a complex attack on his convoy involving an improvised explosive device and an ambush.

Chiarelli, the 1st CD Commander at the time, personally took the time to award Fernandez

with the honor.

When Fernandez asked Chiarelli to pin on his sergeant stripes, he accepted the opportunity with pride.

We have regularly brought attention to high-speed Soldiers in the battery, and this month we would like to highlight Spc. Patrie Campbell-Sobish, who has a pretty unique story.

Campbell is a medic and part of the medical section. She is not new to the Army – she has spent the last seven years serving her country.

She came to HHB in September 2005, but unlike most Soldiers who arrive to a new unit, Campbell was eight months pregnant with her second child.

This obviously posed some complications to a unit that was on the verge of deploying to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Needless to say, Campbell remained behind in Fort Hood working at Bennett Health Clinic until March.

Campbell served deployed with the 1-501st Infantry to Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan, and she was looking forward to coming to Iraq to serve with her fellow medics.

Since she arrived in theater, Campbell has been working at the 602nd Troop Medical Clinic and training with her unit.

She recently returned from Emergency Medical Technician and Combat Medic Advanced Skills Training refreshers in Balad, Iraq.

"I enjoyed the training up there and am looking forward to teaching the medics what I learned at CMAST," said Campbell.

She would also like to say hello to her husband, son and new daughter and let them know that she misses them and can't wait to get home.

Fortunately, we are finally over the hump and on that downward slope out of Iraq and on our way home.

On behalf of all of our Soldiers in the Hard Rock Battery, we would again like to thank you for your support.

We keep you in our thoughts and prayers, and are excited to see you soon.

PAO, cont'd from pg. 3 —

ting thousands of Christmas television greetings taped and broadcasted back to many of the Service member's hometowns. Talk about a rewarding mission!

As the brigade's public affairs officer and noncommissioned officer-in-charge, I take great pride in telling the stories of this ground-breaking unit.

Being known as the brigade's first PAO is a great honor in itself, and it's a role I take very seriously as both Churchill and I strive to tell the American public of what great things our Soldiers are doing here in Iraq.

You can always check out the fruits of our labor by logging onto the Fires Brigade Web site where you will find a plethora of articles and photos collected since the beginning of the deployment.

The easiest way for me to remember how to reach it, and the easiest way I tell folks to do is to first type in:

www.hood.army.mil

From there, click on the 4th Infantry Division link, and then click on Units.

Once you do that, click on Fires Brigade, where you will find all the separate units which are under the Iron Gunner umbrella of coverage. Happy surfing!

Lastly, I hope this letter finds you all safe and well. I also want to take this opportunity to say that we think of you all the time, and we applaud each and every one of you back on the home front keeping things in order.

I know we can never totally appreciate what you are going through, so we all want to say a huge thank you for the care packages, letters, prayers and well wishes.

We are about halfway through, and believe me, we are looking forward to getting back to Texas soon.

Until then, we here in the public affairs office will continually strive to bring your loved ones home in the best way we know how – by highlighting the great accomplishments they continue to make.

Stay safe and take care. We want you around when we return for good later this year.

S-1, cont'd from pg. 4



Photo contributed by WO1 Arnold Guzman, Human Resources Technician

Fires Brigade S-1: Back, from left, Spc. Joshua Overton, Staff Sgt. LaTrece Peterson, Sgt. 1st Class Shauna Patterson and Warrant Officer 1 Arnold Guzman. In front, Spc. Rosalio Laguna and Maj. Andrey Tymniak.

Spc. Joshua Overton has been in the Army for a year and a half and he is the administration clerk. He is a high school graduate from Scottsville, Kentucky.

As the administration clerk, his duties include personnel actions, awards and memorandum processing. Overton's hobbies include reading, watching movies and hanging out with friends.

Spc. Rosalio Laguna is the newest addition to the S1 Office. He has been in the Army for more than six years and is also from Houston. Laguna enjoys playing basketball. His duties while deployed in support of OIF include correspondence distribution, memorandum preparation, and personnel actions processing. Laguna is a high school graduate and has some college.

IG6, cont'd from pg. 2

deserve.

As we move in to the summer months, the remaining troopers who have not yet taken leave will be afforded the opportunity to come home for a well deserved break.

Although this time is always filled with the joys of reunion, I want to urge everyone to be safe while having fun and enjoying the company of family and friends.

I encourage you to watch over one another. We need each and every one of you, Soldiers and families alike.

Once again, as I like to do at the end of these articles, I want to thank all of the families, friends and spouses of the Fires Brigade for your support to one another, our brigade and our nation.

Your contributions to this operation do not go unnoticed. Thanks for all you do.

MEDICS, cont'd from pg. 5

refresher training to sustain the knowledge.

Along with the series of classes given by our physicians, HHB medics continue to train on the tactical skills required of combat medics. Their weekly expert field medic badge training combines both medical and tactical skills to ensure both technical and technical proficiency.

In the last month, the EFMB areas covered included chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear training; assembly and disassembly of the M-16 and M-9 weapon systems; individual movement techniques; and communication skills with an RT-1523 radio.

The coveted EFMB is a special skills badge that can only be earned after going through a rigorous course to test a medic's medical and Soldier skills. With training like this, we are preparing for all of our medics to earn that badge.

The headquarters medical platoon is also providing medics to Division to assist in medical coverage for missions outside our Brigade. These include assisting the 4th Infantry Division medical transition teams and providing medical coverage for the 4th Inf. Div. Detainee Holding Area.

For two medics in the 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery medical platoon, last month was a time of transition.

Sgt. Charles Egerstrom and Spc. Joshua Kelly, both attached to Battery A, recently completed a successful move to a different forward operating base. Both medics were instrumental in the packing, loading, and execution of the move.

Kelly was part of the advanced party that arrived at FOB Fallujah a week earlier than the rest of the battery. He located a suitable building for a battalion aid station, and much of Egerstrom and Kelly's efforts for the last month have been focused on position improvement.

They have been working on getting adequate power and lighting supplied to the BAS as well as stocking it with all of the necessary medical supplies.

On top of this, these medics have been providing medical support to Battery A's firing platoons during recent combat missions.

The Battery B firing platoon, was supported single handedly by Spc. Russell Dragon for most of last month. The other attached medic, Spc. Chris Santomo, was in Texas enjoying his environmental morale leave.

The remainder of the medical platoon at FOB Q-West was busy conducting training.



Photo contributed by Capt. Jim Silvertrim, Medical Plans Officer

Spc. Bobby Warden (left) practices ventilating a casualty on Spc. Gregory Guiterrez as Sgt. Jason Foy evaluates. Warden and Guiterrez are both medics in 67th Forward Support Company, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery, Fires Brigade. Foy is a medic with 4th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery, another unit on Forward Operating Base Q-West.

All seven medics and the physician assistant attended a cardiopulmonary resuscitation recertification course. All eight Soldiers passed the written and hands on exam and were recertified for two years. Additional training has been

focused on advanced cardiac life support. Capt. Cleve Sylvester, our physician assistant, conducted the training, which lasted several hours each day the entire month. This will prepare the medics for an upcoming ACLS certification course.

Aside from training, the medical platoon also conducted an inventory of all medical equipment sets brought with us from Fort Hood.

Next month looks just as busy with a scheduled combat lifesaver course, ACLS certification and several battalion ranges to support.

We also have a great team at the 589th Brigade Support Battalion.

The medical operations section has three personnel: a medical operations officer, a medical operations non commissioned officer, and a patient administrator. This section has done great work for the 589th BSB and the brigade as a whole.

Staff Sgt. Christopher Parks, the operations NCO, recently returned from a four-day convoy to southern Iraq where he not only served as the sole medic but was the convoy commander.

Prior to departure, he successfully immunized the 589th BSB Soldiers for hepatitis A & B and typhoid by completing two Kamikaze medic missions.

These internally derived missions were prepared by 1st Lt. David Kuhn, the operations officer, and verified by Sgt. Jose Trevizo, the patient administrator.

Trevizo works at the 602nd Area Support Medical Company as the primary patient administrator. He recently logged over one thousand patients, ensuring timely and appropriate care for all personnel, both Soldier and Civilian.

Additionally, Trevizo tracks the medical readiness of the 589th BSB, maintaining dental, optometry, and immunization numbers daily. He recently volunteered and was trained for the additional duty of primary weapons trainer for 589th's headquarters company.

Please see **MEDICS** page 12



ROC Soldiers proud to support MND-B

By Sgt. Jason Trahan
ROC Assist. Ops NCO

From convoy assistance and medical evacuation coordination to supporting maneuver units within the Multi-National Division-Baghdad area of operations, the Soldiers of the Rear Operations Center have done it all!

Without any prior experience or having operational knowledge of ROC operations, our Soldiers have adapted well to assuming the responsibilities of the MND-B mission.

On Dec. 5, 2005, the selected Soldiers of Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) assumed the ROC mission.

Our ROC personnel underwent extensive training during the transfer of authority with the out-

going 3rd Infantry Division.

After the TOA our personnel were prepared to assume the arduous responsibility of maintaining the lines of communication for the Division.

When activities happen on routes within the MND-B AO, the ROC coordinates with subordinate units and assists them in adjusting route statuses to ensure that friendly convoys are operating under the safest conditions possible.

As the ROC mission gradually comes to a close we are truly proud of the support that our ROC team has been able to provide to the units within MND-B.

We look forward to re-integrating with our Fires Brigade units and continuing to support the war effort to the best of our abilities.

Photo contributed by the ROC

The Soldiers of the Rear Operations Center.

Back, from left: Staff Sgt. Antonio Razor, Sgt. Hakeem Shipley, Capt. Ralph Feilds, 1st Lt. Michael Martinez, Maj. Richard Watson, Sgt. 1st Class Antwone Reese, Sgt. Yessenia Alfaro, Sgt. 1st Class Renoir Riley, Spc. Michael Russo, Pfc. Joseph Baudhuin, Sgt. William Rassman, Sgt. 1st Class Adam Scarr. Front, from left: Sgt. Nathan Theroux, Pfc. Abraham Elizondo, Pfc. Robert Shofner and Sgt. Jason Trahan.

MEDICS, cont'd from pg. 6

The 589th BSB also has a medical logistics section. The team consists of two personnel; 2nd Lt. Tanya McClendon is the medical logistics officer and Staff Sgt. Valrica Pollard is the medical logistics NCO.

McClendon and Pollard have also been able to attend medical training. Both successfully completed the basic lifesaver course.

They have also done great work in preparing the Fires Brigade for the upcoming summer.

They ensured the Brigade had sufficient permethrin on hand to treat our uniforms and have fully stocked the Brigade with critical supplies such as intra-

venous fluids, DEET, and sunscreen.

Last month was a proud month for the medical team when we promoted Pollard to staff sergeant. She was promoted by her sister, who is also deployed here, at a ceremony in front of the 589th BSB headquarters.

As we reach the midpoint of our tour, many of our medics have taken their leave back home with the rest to follow in the coming months. Getting something in the mail from a loved one is always the highlight of any Soldiers' day. Please keep writing and I'll remind our team that you enjoy getting mail as much as we do.

Until next month's update, take care and God Bless.

A look back at the last month...



Above: The Fires Brigade personal security detail poses on the headquarters deck, celebrating Spc. Corey Jarels and Sgt. Christopher Fernandez's promotions.

From left: Spc. Brett Graham, Pfc. Alex Mecca, Sgt. Christopher Fernandez, Sgt. Joshua Turner, Spc. Corey Jarels, Cpl. Marco Nelson, Spc. Fernando Mendoza and Spc. Todd Fatzsinger.

Photos by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO



Left: Sgt. Matthew Cates and Cpl. Jeffery Gibbon, 324th Network Support Company, are inducted into the Noncommissioned Officers Corps during a ceremony at the Ironhorse Conference Center. Fourteen Soldiers in the brigade were honored during the ceremony.



Above: Sgt. 1st Class Wilemina Jules, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, reads a poem during the 589th BSB Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers Mother's Day program. The event's theme, "The Faith of a Determined Woman," was inspired by fellow HHC Soldier's, Pfc. Dexter Hicks, grandmother.

CHAPLAIN, cont'd from pg. 5

for the man has changed and so has the river."

We need to realize that many things have changed in our lives during the six months that we have been separated. Our family members have grown not only physically; but also emotionally and personally.

New information and skills have been acquired and become part of our lives. Family members have assumed and successfully performed tasks and functions as never before.

There have been tremendous gains achieved by many by becoming more self-reliant; and by reaching out to others.

Along with these gains; there have been losses.

The basketball, soccer, or football games that a soldier-parent was not able to attend. For others there were band concerts and half-time performances that were not seen except by video tape or DVD. Still others won swimming or tennis tournaments without the presence of the proud Dad or beaming Mom.

The solitary spouse sat at Sunday school or church. The college bound freshman had to make the journey to higher education alone.

All of these events and many others like them have changed us. One of the biggest mistakes that we can make is to think that we can just begin our marriage and family relations just like we left them. We can't because we have all changed.

Returning to our basketball halftime analogy; coaches and players attempt to make *intentional changes* to achieve success in the second half.

What changes would you like to make over the next six months? What goals have you not achieved?

Carl Rogers, one of the premier counselors of the last century, once said, "What is most personal is most universal." What you are feeling may be exactly the same thing that your fellow spouse or Soldier is feeling.

We have already begun planning reunion and reintegration marriage retreats for when we return. I encourage you to sign up for them and participate as we all can learn from one another.